

New government of Aruba is sworn in



Page 9



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Convicted of bilking investors, Nikola founder and Trump donor gets a presidential pardon

By MATT OTT
AP Business Writer

Trevor Milton, the founder of electric vehicle start-up Nikola who was sentenced to prison last year for fraud, was pardoned by President Donald Trump, the White House confirmed Friday.

The pardon of Milton, who was sentenced to four years in prison for exaggerating the potential of his technology, could wipe out hundreds of millions of dollars in restitution that prosecutors were seeking for defrauded investors.

Milton, 42, and his wife donated more than \$1.8 million to a Trump re-election campaign fund less than a month before the November election, according to the Federal Election Commission.

At Milton's trial, prosecutors say a company video of a prototype truck appearing to be driven down a desert highway was actually a video of a nonfunctioning Nikola that had been rolled down a hill.

Milton had not been incarcerated pending an appeal.

Milton said late Thursday on social media that he had been pardoned by Trump. "I am incredibly grateful to President Trump for his



Trevor Milton, left, leaves the Thurgood Marshall United States Courthouse on Monday, Sept. 12, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

courage in standing up for what is right and for granting me this sacred pardon of innocence," Milton said. The White House confirmed the pardon Friday, though there was no notice of a pardon on the White House website.

When asked by a reporter in a news conference Friday why he pardoned Milton, Trump said it was "highly recommended by many people." Trump suggested

that Milton was prosecuted because he supported the president.

"They say the the thing that he did wrong was he was one of the first people that supported a gentleman named Donald Trump for president," Trump said.

Trump went on to say that Milton "did nothing wrong" and that the Southern District of New York's prosecutors were "a vicious group of people."

During his securities fraud case, Milton was defended by two lawyers with connections to Trump: Marc Mukasey, who has represented the Trump Organization; and Brad Bondi, the brother of Pam Bondi, who Trump appointed as U.S. Attorney General.

Trump wasted little time in using his pardon power since beginning his second term.

Hours after taking office, he

wiped clean the records of roughly 1,500 people who participated in the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the U.S. Capitol. The next day, Trump announced that he had pardoned Ross Ulbricht, the founder of Silk Road, an underground website for selling drugs.

Ulbricht had been sentenced to life in prison in 2015 after a high-profile prosecution that highlighted the role of the internet in illegal markets.

Nikola, which was a hot start-up and rising star on Wall Street before becoming enmeshed in scandal, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in February.

Milton, convicted of fraud, was portrayed by prosecutors as a con man six years after he had founded the company in a basement in Utah.

Prosecutors said Milton falsely claimed to have built its own revolutionary truck that was actually a General Motors product with Nikola's logo stamped onto it.

Called as a government witness, Nikola's CEO testified that Milton "was prone to exaggeration" when pitching his venture to investors. □

Trump says the U.S. will help in Asia quake. A former official says the system is now in 'shambles'



In this image provided by The Myanmar Military True News Information Team, Damaged buildings caused by an earthquake is seen Friday, March 28, 2025, in Naypyitaw, Myanmar.

Associated Press

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Friday that the U.S. was going to help with the response to Southeast Asia's deadly earthquake.

But the effects of his administration's deep cuts in foreign assistance through the U.S. Agency for International Development and the State Department will likely be tested in any response to the first big natural disaster of his second term.

Sarah Charles, a former senior USAID official who oversaw disaster-response teams and overall humani-

tarian work under the Biden administration, said the system was now "in shambles," without the people or resources to move quickly to pull out survivors from collapsed buildings and otherwise save lives.

A powerful quake shook Myanmar and neighboring Thailand on Friday, killing at least 150 people and burying others under the rubble of high-rises.

Asked about the quake by reporters in Washington, Trump said: "We're going to be helping. We've already alerted the people. Yeah, it's terrible what happened."

At the State Department, spokesperson Tammy Bruce told reporters the administration would use requests for assistance and reports from the region to shape its response to the quake.

"USAID has maintained a team of disaster experts with the capacity to respond if disaster strikes," Bruce said. "These expert teams provide immediate assistance, including food and safe drinking water, needed to save lives in the aftermath of a disaster." Despite cuts, "there has been no impact on our ability to perform those duties," Bruce said. □

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Fewer Americans now see Canada as a close U.S. ally as Trump strains a longtime partnership

By JILL COLVIN and LINLEY SANDERS

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Americans are less likely to see Canada and the U.S. as close allies than they were two years ago, the latest indication that President Donald Trump's tariff threats and talk of taking over a neighboring ally are souring a critical economic and military relationship.

The U.S. shift in viewpoint comes primarily from Democrats, though Republicans are less likely to see Canada as America's ally now too, according to a new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. While about 7 in 10 Democrats saw Canada and the U.S. as close allies before Trump returned to office, now that number is down to about half. For Republicans, the number dropped from 55% to 44%.

Although most still see the countries' relationship as at least "friendly," just under half of U.S. adults now consider the U.S. to be "close allies" with its neighbor to the north. That's down from about 6 in 10 in a Pearson Institute/AP-NORC poll conducted in September 2023.

"He's turning everybody against us," bemoaned Lynn Huster, 73, a lifelong Democrat who lives in York, Pennsylvania. Huster says she has been dismayed by Trump's actions and how they have affected relationships with other allies, including the United Kingdom.

"Canada," she said, had been "our friends, you know, they backed us. And some of the other countries, the U.K., they don't want any part of us anymore.



Toronto residents Douglas Bloomfield, from right, his son Phoenix and wife Ame, who are on vacation in Washington, hold a Canadian flag and an ice hockey stick to show their support for Canada regarding trade tariffs in front of the White House in Washington, March 13, 2025.

Associated Press

And it's sad that our country's going to stand alone if anything happens."

The poll comes as Trump has dramatically realigned U.S. foreign policy and America's relations since his return to office.

He has slapped sweeping tariffs on goods made in Canada, Mexico and China, and this week added a 25% tax on imported autos. Next week, he says he will put in place "reciprocal" taxes mirroring the tariffs charged by other nations a move he is calling "Liberation Day."

Beyond the economic threats, Trump has repeatedly antagonized and belittled historic partners, notably the one with which the U.S. shares a 5,500-mile (8,900-kilometer) border. He has threatened Canada's sovereignty, saying it should become the country's 51st state, and repeatedly labeled its prime minis-

ter "governor."

His moves have sparked deep feelings of betrayal across Canada, where the U.S.-Canada relationship had long been seen akin to family. The U.S. national anthem has been booed at Canadian arenas and American liquor has been stripped from Canadian shelves.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney, whose party's fortunes have been revived by taking a hard line against Trump, said Thursday that the U.S. is "no longer a reliable partner" and that Canadians must now "look out for ourselves."

Shaya Scher, 35, a Republican who lives in New Jersey, argues that Trump's rhetoric toward Canada is largely bluster.

"I think he's just doing it to make them freak out so they can get a deal," Scher said.

He believes a deal will

eventually happen and tensions will ease.

"I think at the end of the day, they're still allies," he said. "Under the hood we're still allies, and if anything comes up, we'll still be allies."

Others, however, were more despondent.

"He's sabotaging decades of goodwill by having tariffs on foreign steel and foreign cars and foreign flowers," said Scott Cunningham, 69, a Democrat who lives in South Bend, Indiana. "Tariffs are really going to hurt relationships trading relationships, personal relationships after being allies for decades. You do something like that, I'm going to remember that."

About 3 in 10 Americans see Canada as "friendly but not a close ally," while about 2 in 10 say the two countries are "not friendly but not enemies." Very few see them as outright "en-

emies."

Cunningham characterized the current U.S. relationship with Canada as "not friendly but not enemies."

"We're not friends because of tariffs and him wanting to take over the country. That's not going well," he said. "It's very strained right now."

When it comes to the rest of the world, the AP-NORC poll found about half of U.S. adults see the United Kingdom as a close U.S. ally, but only about 3 in 10 say the same about France and Germany. About 4 in 10 say the European Union is a close ally.

Almost no Americans see either Russia or China as a close ally. About one-third say China is an enemy of the United States, and a similar share think this about Russia. Republicans are less likely to see Russia as a threat. Only about one-third of Republicans see Russia as an enemy of the U.S., compared to about 4 in 10 Democrats.

Trent Ramsaran, 37, a freelancer who lives in Brooklyn, New York, said many European leaders of traditional U.S. allies clearly have conflicting views with Trump, particularly on immigration. "I'm starting to see the pattern there where it seems like all these quote-unquote allies are in favor of having immigrants take over the country," he said. "His vision is really not the same as these allies. So he's saying these allies are not on the same page."

But Ramsaran said he's not at all worried about the U.S. someday needing allies it has alienated, given how much the country spends on defense and high-tech weapons. □

Utah becomes first state to ban LGBTQ+ pride flags in government buildings and schools

By HANNAH SCHOENBAUM
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Utah became the first state to prohibit flying LGBTQ+ pride flags at schools and all government buildings after the Republican governor announced he was allowing a ban on unsanctioned flag displays to become law without his signature. Gov. Spencer Cox, who made the announcement late Thursday night, said he continues to have serious concerns with the policy but chose not to reject it because his veto would likely be overridden by the Republican-controlled Legislature.

Starting May 7, state or local government buildings will be fined \$500 a day for flying any flag other than the United States flag, the Utah state flag, military flags or a short list of others approved by lawmakers. Political flags supporting a certain candidate or party, such as President Donald Trump's signature "Make America Great Again" flags, are not allowed.

The new law could stoke conflict between the state and its largest city. City buildings in liberal Salt Lake City typically honor Pride



People march following a Pride rally at the Utah State Capitol Friday, June 2, 2023, in Salt Lake City. Associated Press

Month each June by displaying flags that celebrate its large LGBTQ+ population. Local leaders have illuminated the Salt Lake City and County Building in rainbow lights to protest the flag ban each night since the Legislature sent it to Cox's desk.

Andrew Wittenberg, a spokesperson for Salt Lake City Mayor Erin Mendenhall's office, said their attorneys are evaluating the law and the capital city does not yet have information on what it will do once the law takes effect.

The bill's Republican spon-

sors, Rep. Trevor Lee and Sen. Dan McCay, said it's meant to encourage "political neutrality" from teachers and other government employees. Opponents argued it aims to erase LGBTQ+ expression and take authority away from cities and towns that don't align politically with the Republican Legislature. In a letter to legislative leaders explaining his decision, Cox said he agreed with the "underlying intent" of the bill to make classrooms politically neutral but thought it went too far in regulating local govern-

ments. He also noted that by focusing narrowly on flags, the law does not prevent other political displays such as posters or lighting. "To our LGBTQ community, I know that recent legislation has been difficult," Cox said. "Politics can be a bit of a blood sport at times and I know we've had our disagreements. I want you to know that I love and appreciate you and I am grateful that you are part of our state. I know these words may ring hollow to many of you, but please know that I mean them sincerely."

Cox's decision came hours after the Sundance Film Festival announced it was leaving its home of four decades in Park City, Utah, for Boulder, Colorado.

The flag bill created eleventh-hour tensions as some residents worried it would push the nation's premier independent film festival out of state.

Festival leaders said state politics ultimately did not influence their move from conservative Utah to liberal Colorado. They did, however, make "ethos and equity values" one of their criteria in a nationwide search for a new home and referred to Boulder in their announcement as a "welcoming environment." Utah's flag law goes further than one signed last week in Idaho that only applies to schools.

But Idaho Republicans are also advancing a separate bill to ban government buildings from displaying certain flags.

Florida lawmakers have advanced a proposal to ban pride flags and others that represent political viewpoints in schools and public buildings after similar measures failed in the past two legislative sessions. □

Man held captive for 20 years asks prosecutors why stepmother is free after being charged

WATERBURY, Conn. (AP) — A Connecticut man who told authorities his step-

mother held him captive in their home for two decades since he was a boy



Tracy Vallerand, biological mother of the Waterbury man held captive by his step mother, Kimberly Sullivan, for more than two decades, addresses the media outside state Superior Court in Waterbury following an appearance by Sullivan Wednesday, March 26, 2025, in Waterbury, Conn.

Associated Press

has asked why his she is not behind bars while awaiting trial, a state prosecutor said Friday.

Don Therkildsen Jr., a supervisory assistant state's attorney, made the remark during a court hearing in Waterbury for Kimberly Sullivan, who pleaded not guilty Friday to charges that included kidnapping and felony assault. Sullivan was ordered to be placed on electronic monitoring, and Therkildsen also asked for house arrest over concerns she could flee.

"This victim is afraid. This victim lives in fear," Therkildsen said in court. "I introduced myself to the victim, ex-

plained who I was. His first question in this fear is, 'Why is she out walking around when I was locked up in a room for 20 years?'"

Sullivan, 57, posted \$300,000 bail after she was arrested March 12. She has denied allegations that she kept her stepson locked in a small room in their Waterbury home and limited his food and liquids so much that he weighed only 69 pounds (31 kilograms) when he was rescued. He is 5-foot-9-inches tall (1.75 meters tall).

Sullivan's lawyer, Ioannis Kaloidis, objected to the house arrest request and said Sullivan has complied

with all conditions since she posted bail. He also said threats have been made against Sullivan and confining her to house arrest at one location would put her in danger.

The 32-year-old man set a fire in the house on Feb. 17 in an effort to be free, police said. He was rescued by firefighters and taken to a hospital, where staff said he was emaciated from malnutrition.

He told police that he was locked in the small room with no heat or air conditioning for most of every day since he was about 11 years old, allowed out only briefly to do chores. □

Israel strikes Beirut for the first time since a ceasefire ended the latest Israel-Hezbollah war

By BASSEM MROUE

Associated Press

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP) — Israel on Friday launched an attack on Lebanon's capital for the first time since a ceasefire ended the latest Israel-Hezbollah war in November.

Associated Press reporters in Beirut heard a loud boom and witnessed smoke rising from an area in the city's southern suburbs that Israel's military had vowed to strike.

It marked Israel's first strike on Beirut since a ceasefire took hold last November between it and the Hezbollah militant group, though Israel has attacked targets in southern Lebanon almost daily since then.

Israel's army said it had hit a Hezbollah drone storage facility in Dahiyeh, which it called a militant stronghold. The strike came after Israel, which accuses Hezbollah of using civilians as human shields, warned residents to evacuate the area.

The area struck is a residential and commercial area and is close to at least two schools.

Israel sends a message to



A bomb dropped from an Israeli jet falls before hitting a building in Dahiyeh, in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon, Friday, March 28, 2025.

Associated Press

the Lebanese government. Israeli officials said the attack was retaliation for rockets it said had been fired from Lebanon into northern Israel. They promised strikes on Beirut would continue unless Lebanon's government worked to ensure such attacks ceased.

"We will not allow firing at our communities, not even

a trickle," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said. "We will attack everywhere in Lebanon, against any threat to the State of Israel."

Hezbollah denied firing the rockets, and accused Israel of seeking a pretext to continue attacking Lebanon. Lebanon's government ordered all schools and uni-

versities in Beirut's southern suburb of Hadath to close for the day. Residents were seen fleeing the area in cars and on foot ahead of the strike. Hezbollah began launching rockets, drones and missiles into Israel the day after the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel by its Hamas allies ignited the war in Gaza. Palestinian

militants killed about 1,200 in Israel and abducted 251 others during the 2023 attack.

The Israel-Hezbollah conflict exploded into all-out war last September when Israel carried out waves of airstrikes and killed most of the militant group's senior leaders. The fighting killed over 4,000 people in Lebanon and displaced about 60,000 Israelis.

Under the ceasefire, Israeli forces were supposed to withdraw from all Lebanese territory by late January. The deadline was extended to Feb. 18, but Israel has remained in five border locations while carrying out dozens of strikes on what it said were Hezbollah targets in southern and eastern Lebanon. Last week, Israeli airstrikes on several locations in Lebanon killed six people.

France criticizes failure to observe ceasefire. Speaking in Paris, Lebanon's President, Joseph Aoun, said the Beirut area strike was a continuation "of Israel's violations of the agreement" sponsored by France and the U.S. □

China's government bristles at growing ties between the U.S. and oil-rich Guyana

By BERT WILKINSON

Associated Press

GEORGETOWN, Guyana (AP) — China's government bristled Friday at the strengthening ties between Guyana and the United States in online comments a day after a visit to the South American country by U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

The Chinese comments came after Guyanese President Irfaan Ali said his oil-rich nation would give the U.S. preferential treatment over other countries after it pledged to respond forcefully if neighboring Venezuela tries to annex Guyanese territory as it has threatened.

The Chinese Embassy in Guyana posted on Facebook on Friday that China

has always "put China-Guyana Friendship first."

"We honor our commitment with concrete actions. As a matter of fact, China has participated fully at the biggest economic and social transformation in the history of Guyana. Facts and figures speak louder than anything else," the embassy said.

China cited its \$1.4 billion in annual trade with Guyana and a string of major infrastructure projects that Chinese firms are undertaking, some secured by Chinese loans. These include the new Demerara Harbor Bridge, China-Guyana Joe Vieria Park, six regional hospitals and the East Coast Demerara road project.

After Rubio's visit to Guyana and meeting with Ali

on Thursday, he traveled to Suriname where he joked at a news conference about the ruggedness of Guyana's airport road built with China's help.

"They don't do a bad job, they do a terrible job," the U.S. diplomat said of China's projects abroad. "I just came from Guyana, where we had to drive on a road the Chinese built. We almost all had concussions, because the road was so bad. It was terrible."

Rubio also criticized China for bringing in their own workers to work on projects abroad, adding that the country also wants "you to borrow a bunch of money and then they hold it over your head."

However, Rubio noted that U.S. companies are not tak-

ing advantage of investment opportunities in the region, echoing similar remarks by Surinamese President Chan Santokhi.

Not all the countries are

showing up," Santokhi said. "We are inviting investors. My invitation to (Rubio) was that we need the private sector of the United States." □



U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, left, shakes hands with Suriname's President Chan Santokhi in Georgetown, Guyana, Thursday, March 27, 2025.

Associated Press

Canadian company seeks U.S. permission to start deep-sea mining as outcry ensues

By **DÁNICA COTO**
Associated Press
SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— An abrupt announcement rattled members of a little-known U.N. agency based in Jamaica that has protected international deep-sea waters for more than 30 years.

The Metals Company in Vancouver, Canada said late Thursday that it is seeking permission from the U.S. government to start deep-sea mining in international waters, potentially bypassing the International Seabed Authority, which has the power to authorize exploitation permits but has yet to do so.

"It would be a major breach of international law...if the U.S. were to grant it," said Duncan Currie, an international and environmental lawyer and legal adviser to the Deep Sea Conservation Coalition, a Netherlands-based alliance of environmental groups. The Metals Company seeks seafloor minerals like cobalt, copper, nickel and manganese used in electric car batteries and



Delegates from across the world gather for a meeting by the International Seabed Authority (ISA), a U.N. body in Kingston, Jamaica, July 14, 2015.

Associated Press

other green technology. The announcement was made just hours before the 36-member council of the International Seabed Authority met in Jamaica on Friday, the last day of a two-week conference focused on how and if to allow deep-sea mining, a

years-long debate. The authority was scheduled to talk Friday about the company's commercial mining application. "The scale of the threat... has been taken incredibly seriously here," said Louisa Casson, a campaigner at Greenpeace who attend-

ed Friday's meeting. "There are questions and a lack of clarity of what they actually plan on doing." She said one question is whether the company plans to request a permit anyway from the authority even as it continues talks with the U.S. government.

Currie said the timing of The Metals Company's announcement was "insulting to the ISA."

"It's an extremely irresponsible threat. It's basically holding a gun to the international community," he said.

The International Seabed Authority was created in 1994 by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, which is ratified by more than 165 nations but not the United States.

The Metals Company argued that the United States' seabed mining code would allow it to start operations in international waters since it's not a member of the authority and therefore not bound by its rules.

The company said it was already in discussions with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, among others.

"We have met with numerous officials in the White House as well as U.S. Congress regarding their support for this industry," the company said in a statement. □

Rebels agree to a ceasefire with African coalition troops departing from eastern Congo

By **JUSTIN KABUMBA**
Associated Press
GOMA, Congo (AP) — The

M23 rebels in control of key areas of eastern Congo agreed Friday to a ceasefire with African coalition peacekeepers who have announced their withdrawal even as the conflict between the insurgents and Congo's government continues.

The rebels and troops from the South African Development Community, or SADC, said in a joint news release that they would work together to rebuild the airport in the eastern hub of Goma, which was damaged when rebels took over, so that the SADC troops could depart the country in an orderly way.

The force of several thousand peacekeeping troops from South Africa, Malawi

and Tanzania had been sent to eastern Congo by the SADC in 2023 to help the Congolese government pacify a mineral-rich region plagued by various insurgencies.

The troops failed to stop the

cities and that left several peacekeepers dead, eroding support for the mission in the donor countries. The SADC leadership announced their withdrawal earlier this month.

The rebels and SADC troops



Former members of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) and police officers who allegedly surrendered to M23 rebels arrive in Goma, Congo, Sunday, Feb. 23, 2025.

Associated Press

be repaired before they can leave," M23 spokesman Lawrence Kanyuka said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Kanyuka called it a "historic day," and said that the agreement with the SADC mission reflected an awareness that the conflict must be resolved politically not through fighting.

"We thank SADC today for understanding that there is no military solution to this conflict. They came today, and we talked about dialogue," Kanyuka said, adding that their withdrawal was "one of the prerequisites" for dialogue.

Kanyuka accused Congolese troops of violating ongoing ceasefire negotiations and said that M23 had requested that the SADC "talk to Kinshasa to get them to stop and adhere

to this ceasefire, which we have respected until now."

The SADC mission was part of a myriad of forces operating in the mineral-rich region plagued by decades of armed violence. They include Congolese government soldiers, foreign mercenaries, a United Nations peacekeeping force and more than 100 groups that are fighting for power, land and valuable mineral resources. Others try to defend their communities. Some armed groups have been accused of mass killings targeting ethnic groups.

The M23 rebels are supported by about 4,000 troops from neighboring Rwanda, according to U.N. experts, and at times have vowed to march as far as Congo's capital, Kinshasa, over 1,000 miles away. □

Aruba: the legend behind its name

(Oranjestad)—Most folkloric tales and legends in Aruba revolve around our indigenous ancestors, who came from mainland Venezuela, and discovered the island and made it into their new home. This particular legend tells the story of the birth of the Aruba name.

The legend follows the life of Arua, an indigenous Cacique originally from Aroa in the Falcon state in Venezuela in the year 50 AD. Arua had a son around the year 70 AD with his wife Shira, who they named Corobori. When Corobori was old enough, he joined his father on the usual boat trip to the islands of Curacao and Bonaire to gather salt.

On their way back to Mainland Venezuela, they were caught up in a heavy rain storm—a side effect from a passing, but far away, hurricane. Of course, because of the lack of motors and sail, their boat was left in the mercy of the heavy winds. After a while, the storm started to pass, and the clouds began to clear up. Finally able to see around them, the Cacique spotted land approximately an hour away. So, they started to row in that direction until they reached the coast.

Once they arrived on what they thought was Venezuela, they decided to stay the night and fix their kayak. The next morning, the Cacique ordered his son and a few warriors to go find any sign of population in the area: "Corobori," Arua said. "Don't come back without news. It's in your hands how long we stay here till we find our family. So, if you need to take a week to gather information, we will wait for you."

"Don't worry," Corobori replied. "As soon as we have any information, we will let you know." Armed with arrows and spears, backpacks filled with food and water containers, they set off. They climbed several small hills, but no sign of a village. They crossed different dry riverbeds, but no sign of anything. When the sun finally descended, they found themselves near a fairly tall hill and decided to climb it for a better view of a village. This hill was called Pan Dushi or Orcuyo, which today we call Hooiberg.

The next morning, they could clearly see that they have landed on an island, but an unfamiliar one at that. When Corobori went back to where his father was waiting, he told him the news: "Father Arua, you have just discovered an island, but it is not Curacao or Bonaire. Far in the south, we saw the big mountains of our homeland Venezuela, which we could have never seen on the other island. This leads us to believe we are on a new island. But that's not all. When the sun came up, we saw in the distance a glowing plain, which we think may be salt."

The Cacique was pleased to hear of his son's findings. He decided to stay a couple days on the newly-discovered island in search for salt. The next morning they ascended Hooiberg again and stayed to see if they could find nearby smoke, indicating an inhabitant village. But they found nothing. So they went back to their initial arrival settlement, now known as Santo Largo in Savaneta. The next morning they hiked along the Spaans Lagoen near the Mangel Halto Beach and reached the area of Bushiri. There, they boarded their kayaks and heading to what we know now as Malmok, where they found rocks of salt. After a couple days of exploring the island and gathering some salt rocks, they left for Venezuela, where they were reunited with their families.

Throughout the year, they travelled back and forth to Aruba, collecting salt. After a while they settled on the island, generations of families living along the coast. Corobori was the first indigenous inhabitant in our history to explore the entirety of the island.

Arua, after decades as the leader of his tribe, spent his last days on the island. Having reached 80 years old, he called for his family on his death bed. In his hammock, he said: "My children, many years have passed, and I've asked my warrior to bring me back to the island so I can laid to rest. The God of living has given me the gift of life to see my son, grandchildren and great grandchildren. But now he is calling me home. Corobori, my torch is now passed to you. Guide our people, and be the leader you were always meant to become. If one day you leave my island, do not forget that it is also yours. This is my last wish: When I die, bury me in our maize plantation."

And so when the Cacique passed away, his wishes were granted and he was laid to rest in the area we now know as the Paradera Cemetery. Where he used to live, they built the Paradera Church.

And that is the tale of what inspired the Aruba name. In the generations that lived or travelled back and forth to the island, there were many familiar names*, like Guadiriki, a warrior who was there when the island got discovered and his son, whom he called Huliba; Corobori and his children, Corodori, Camacuri and Turibana, Masiduri; and Malmok, the 13-year-old boy who alerted the Cacique when the Caribes attacked.

Familiar names: all these names are familiar to Arubans, as these are the names of places and plants on the island. □

Source: Un storia di e Indjan Arua (A story of the Indian Arua) by Adolf (Dufi) Kock



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Fred de Jong presents the Aruba Frank Sinatra Show live at The Cinemas

(Oranjestad)—Take advantage of your chance to lounge back and delight in the memorable melodies of one of the greatest entertainers of all time, Frank Sinatra. Join fellow Sinatra fans

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his beautiful rendition of some of Sinatra's best hits, including fan favorites from the legend like "Fly Me To The Moon", "My Way", "New York – New York" and more! Sing along to some of Sinatra's rendition of classic Christmas songs and take in the experience in The Cinemas VIP lounging theater for only \$40 per person.

De Jong invites you to be a part of a classy, beautiful evening of jazzy swing classics each Thursday from 7:30 PM to 9PM at The Cinemas in Paseo Herencia. Seating is limited.

Book your seat now at arubasinatra.com/book. Food and drink not included. ☐

Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals



(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand confiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable. Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that they have

to pay before leaving. This is surely not a pleasant experience for the tourist. This also leads to a negative reaction which can put our tourism in a negative light.

Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours! ☐

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New government of Aruba is sworn in

Yesterday morning, six ministers of the new AVP-Futuro Cabinet were sworn in, in front of Governor of Aruba His Excellency Mr. Alfonso Boekhoudt. After a very long process of cabinet formation, finally Aruba has a new government.

This follows the previous Wever-Croes II Cabinet, led by ex-prime minister Mrs. Evelyn Wever-Croes.

Upon leaving their swearing in ceremony, the new Cabinet gave statements to the waiting press. Leader of the AVP party and new (again!) Prime Minister, Mike Eman, said it was a very special moment, full of emotion.

"An emotional moment, of taking such a big responsibility again to lead our country in a coalition in which we invested a lot of time to create a base of trust between AVP and Futuro. I feel that the enthusiasm, determination and will to go and serve our community is very big, and particularly on the topics that are important we share thoughts to help those who needs us the most in this moment," he commented.

At the same time, Eman thanked the people of Aruba for the support and trust that



Ex-minister of Justice, Rocco Tjon handing over duties to new minister Mervin Wyatt Ras.



Ex-minister of Finance, Xiomara Maduro with her successor, Geoffrey Wever.

they received, which brought them where they are today. "Trust is earned and you need to work for it every day, be present every day, have an ear for our community, have heart for our community; and this government will be one that will be with the people, that will listen, visit the neighborhoods, feel the needs of our people. We have a lot of confidence that this government will respond to the expectations of the community," he added.

For her part, leader of Futuro and vice-prime minister, Ms. Gerlien Croes expressed her gratitude for having been part of the special moment. "Thankful for what life brings to us, and I am honored to be sworn in as a minister of the country of Aruba. Really, so

much change continuously, but certainly with a lot of will and love to work for Aruba," she said.

Croes explained that they have already received some dossiers that they needed from the outgoing cabinet, and based on that, work starts right away.

Yesterday afternoon already, Parliament – composed now of almost all ex-ministers of the Wever-Croes II Cabinet – held a session on the budget for the new government for 2025. Croes said that this is to comply with an agreement with the Netherlands on this, which means that Aruba had to complete the budget by the 31st of March.

For their part, the departing

ministers from the Wever-Croes II Cabinet shared images and heart-felt comments on social media of their last moments in office. Among them, ex-prime minister Wever-Croes shared a visit she paid to ex-minister of Transport, Ursell Arends on their last day. Ex-minister of Tourism, Dangui Oduber also shared an image leaving his office, while ex-minister of Justice, Rocco Tjon and ex-minister of Finance, Xiomara Maduro, shared images of the hand-over process to their successors,



Ex-minister of Tourism, Dangui Oduber leaving office on the last day.

Mervin Wyatt-Ras and Geoffrey Wever, respectively. □



Ex-minister of Transport, Ursell Arends talking to his successor, Wendrick Cicilia.



Ex-prime minister Evelyn Wever-Croes pays a visit to ex-minister Ursell Arends and his team on their last day.

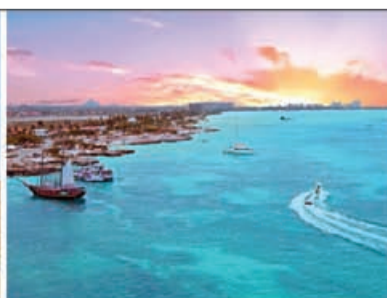
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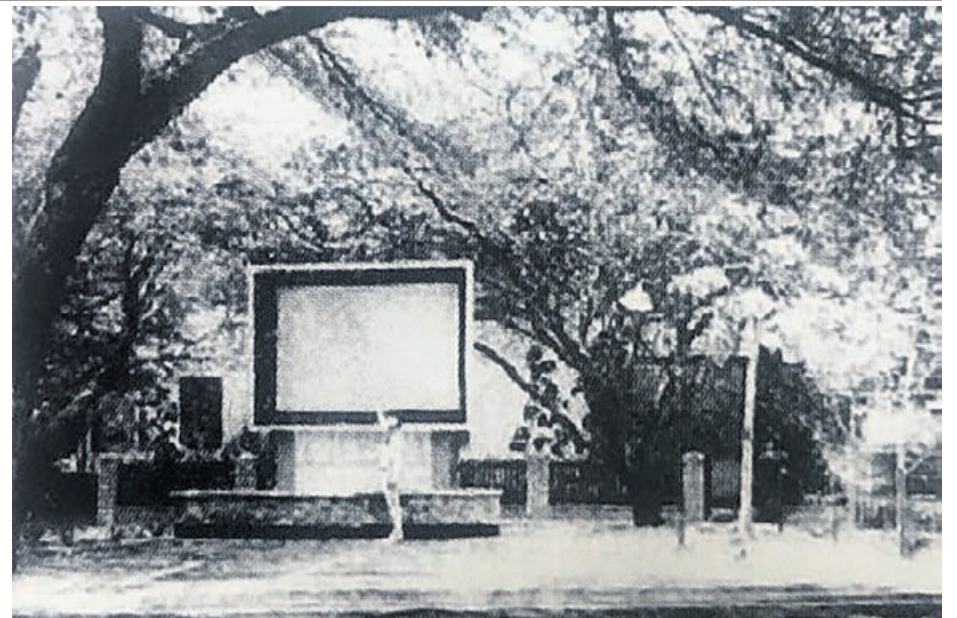
Forgotten gems Open air movie theaters



(Oranjestad)—During the span of over 100 years, Aruba only saw five open air movie theatres. Now practically obsolete on the island, these theaters were once frequently visited by locals and migrants in the 20th century.

The first open air theater was constructed in 1920 and was commissioned by Shon Eduard (Eddy) de Veer. This theater was located at the Hotel Colombia in Oranjestad, which is now where the Aruban census office is located. The theater was simple; it only consisted of a screen, and visitors had to bring their own chairs to enjoy the popular silent movies of the time.

American migrants who worked in the refinery and lived in the Lago Colony in Sero Colorado also had their piece of the pie with their Open air Theatre, which formed part of the Esso Club, also known as the Pan-Am Club. It was at this theater that "Talkies" were first streamed, movies with sound. This theater mostly streamed American blockbusters for the American expats, this way making sure that these migrant were not missing out on entertainment from their home land.



In the 1950's and 60's, Savaneta saw their own open air theater, located in front of the Marinier's Kazerne (Marine Barracks). This theater was mostly visited by the neighboring marines, who didn't have much entertainment other than movies at that time.

The last and most recent open air theater was constructed in the form of a drive-in theater. A popular American concept, the Drive Inn located in Balashi was a hot spot for teenagers, who had the habit of cramming all their friends in one car to go see the movies. For this phenomenon there was

a separate price that you had to pay called the "car crash".

This theater closed around 2012, but was re-opened during the pandemic in July 2020, where movies were streamed on a gigantic screen set up in front of stacked containers. However, this nostalgic form of entertainment did not last very long as it was closed again only a year or two later. Nowadays you can still see the stacked containers when you drive near the bridge in Balashi. □

Source: "De kolibrie op de rots en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba" by Evert Bongers.

Meet our Aruban trailblazers: Padu Lampe

(Oranjestad)—This week we remember one of our most beloved Aruban giant, Juan Chabaya Lampe—better known as Padu Lampe or Padu del Caribe. As one of the most important and renowned artists in the Aruban cultural sphere, Padu's long career led him to be honored today as "the father of culture."

On April 26th, 1920, Juan Chabaya Lampe "Padu Lampe/Padu del



Caribe" was born in Nassaustraat, Oranjestad. He grew up in a happy musical environment, and it is because of this that he developed a love for music. Starting from the age of 12, he was agile in the clarinet, mandolin and cuatro. Henry Lampe, his father, was also a well-known pianist and musician. In a publication of the informative seminar, "Observer", from august 1st, 1962, Padu's many merits and friendly personality stood out. It was said that he was an excellent pianist with a personal style and full of surprises. Secondly, though the composer was not too familiar with music theory, he showed innovations in his compositions. Lastly, Padu was a promoter of Creole music around the world. One of the most important moments in Aruban history, in which he was able to witness first-hand, was the first radio broadcast on the island on March 20th, 1954. Here, he was accompanied by Antillean guitarist Julian Coco and Hubert "Loi" Booi. In the art world, Padu was also a known painter. During his youth, he made several painting using

his unique style. In 1939, he participated in an art exhibit in New York, where he won a bronze medal for his painting "Typical View of Aruba."

Padu remained a popular artist within the Dutch Antilles and the Caribbean as a pianist, singer, author and painter. Padu Lampe was a local artist who became renowned in Venezuela, Colombia, The U.S. and The Netherlands too. In the 1950s, he sold no less than 50 thousand copies of his long-playing albums (LPs).

Padu Lampe was a multifaceted artist, inspired by his interest in parapsychology and supernatural phenomenon. He wrote three books in Papiamentu on the subject in 1986, which was published by the Aruban National Printing Press with sponsorship provided by the Prince Bernhard Funds Netherlands Antilles.

Besides that, Padu passed his exam on "Society to Advanced Ethical Hypnosis" in 1964 in New Jersey. He received a certificate as a hypnotechnician, which gave him the authority to practice hypnosis in some states.

Over the course of his career, he received many accolades and awards in Aruba, Curacao, Venezuela and the Netherlands.

Padu del Caribe passed away on November 29th, 2019, at the age of 99 years old. Padu brought the Aruban culture around the world. His legacy will remain ingrained in the Aruban cultural history, and he will be known forever as one of the most influential trailblazers of our community.

Padu will always be in Aruba's heart, because he had composed various special songs dedicated to the mothers of the island; his song "Sonrisa di un baby" ("A baby's Smile") has been written in three different languages. Padu also wrote our national anthem "Aruba Dushi Tera", along with Mr. Rufo Wever. This song was approved by the government of Aruba and was named the official anthem of the island in 1976.

Other songs that have been considered as being almost a second anthem for Arubans is the special composition he wrote for his wife Daisy Croes called "Abo so". Daisy later passed away in 1994. □

Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called Did you know about...?, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamentu we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is placa. Cents are called cen (pronounced: seng), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called Dos placa; 10-cent coins were called debchi; 25-cent coins were called diez placa and the 50-cent coin was once called Yotin (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban



artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism 10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a Turtuga blanco (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Floria (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called Shoshoro. The birds Trupiaal, Shoco, rock drawings, and the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also

a Purun di ceramica (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the Cododo (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), Cangreu di tera (land crab), Willem III Tower, and again the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called Banana di rif. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the Yuwana (Iguana), Aloe, Toteki (lizard), the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the Baile di cinta (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the Dornasol and the Warawara—both local birds, along with the symbols of Cas Floria with a piece of mosaic, the Tuna cactus plant, and the Caha di orgel (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

the word “florin” supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word “florino”, both explanations related to historical Italian currencies. □

Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba



CROSSWORD

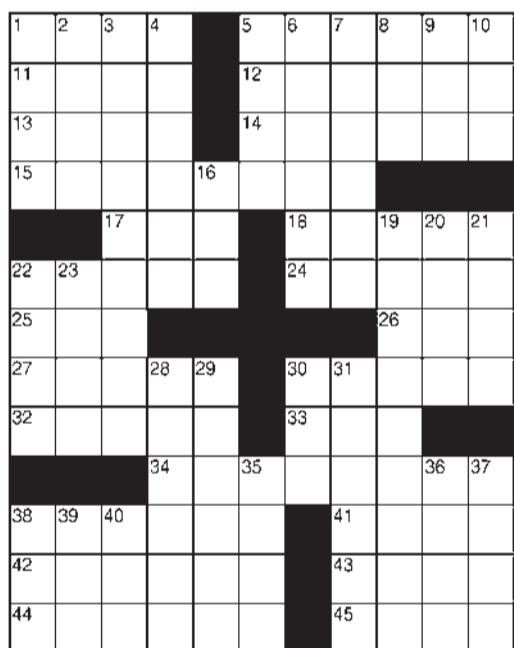
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Ticked off
- 5 Fancy ties
- 11 Motor sound
- 12 Singer Twain
- 13 "Bus Stop" playwright
- 14 Galileo's crime
- 15 Night light
- 17 Singer Reed
- 18 Museum piece
- 22 Ship staffs
- 24 Sleep sound
- 25 Poker prize
- 26 Solo in space
- 27 "— luck!"
- 30 Fragrance
- 32 Toasting word
- 33 Coffee dispenser
- 34 Gambling spot
- 38 Ness nemesis
- 41 Jason's ship
- 42 Like some clocks
- 43 Even
- 44 Most original
- 45 Concludes

DOWN

- 1 Do some laps
- 2 "Dear me!"
- 3 Verdi opera
- 4 Before, poetically
- 5 Tennis great
- 6 Clipping need
- 7 Bizet opera
- 8 Early hour
- 9 Frank McCourt book
- 10 Utter
- 16 Tour carrier
- 19 Wagner opera
- 20 Persia, today
- 21 Minimal change
- 22 NCOs with two stripes
- 23 Corner piece
- 28 Strauss opera
- 29 Singer Morissette
- 30 Minivan alternative
- 31 Dream up
- 35 Splinter group
- 36 Mature with turf
- 37 Supplies
- 38 Fire
- 39 Eroded
- 40 Punch sound



3-30

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

3-30

CRYPTOQUOTE

HLMDW BLGRLJR IDRXBR ORA

ANKB CKO HXDVKJO ZXUIRA

LMA LE GF HXF? — IUKJZRBB

DRKX, "BAXU HXUB"

Cryptoquote: IF THERE EVER COMES A DAY WHEN WE CAN'T BE TOGETHER, KEEP ME IN YOUR HEART; I'LL STAY THERE FOREVER. — A.A. MILNE

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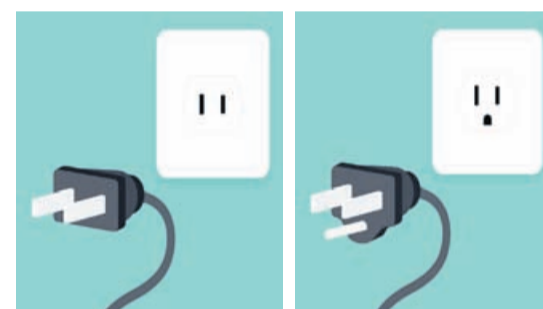
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	24	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	18.00	C	1
TUE	25	MARELLA DISCOVERY	08.00	20.00	C	1
WED	26	AMERA	08.00	23.00	C	1
		OASIS OF THE SEAS	08.00	21.00	I	1
FRI	28	REGAL PRINCESS	09.00	22.00	C	1
SAT	29	STAR CLIPPER	10.00	19.00	C	1
SUN	30	OCEANIA VISTA	10.00	20.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



Noted economist honored by Trump warns his 25% tariffs could add \$4,711 to the cost of a vehicle



An aerial view shows auto dealerships in Cerritos, Calif., Thursday, March 27, 2025.

Associated Press

By JOSH BOAK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Noted economist Arthur Laffer warns in a new analysis that President Donald Trump's 25% tariffs on auto imports could add \$4,711 to the cost of a vehicle and says the proposed taxes could weaken the ability of U.S. automakers to compete with their foreign counterparts.

In the 21-page analysis obtained by The Associated Press, Laffer, whom Trump awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2019 for his contributions to economics, says the auto industry would be in a better position if the Republican president preserved the supply chain rules with Canada and Mexico from his own 2019 USMCA trade pact.

The White House has temporarily exempted auto and parts imports under the USMCA from the tariffs starting on April 3 so that the Trump administration can put together a process for taxing non-U.S. content in vehicles and parts that fall under the agreement. "Without this exemption, the proposed tariff risks causing irreparable damage to the industry, contradicting the administration's goals of strengthening U.S. manufacturing and economic stability," Laffer writes in the analysis. "A 25% tariff would not only shrink, or possibly eliminate, profit margins for U.S. manufacturers but also weaken their ability to compete with international rivals." In a Friday interview with The Associated Press, Laffer said the report had

caused a "kerfuffle" and cautioned that it only applied to the economics, rather than Trump's negotiating skills and strategic approach to trade.

"The report shows the economics of what would happen were the tariffs to be put in place," he said. "This is about facts, not how we feel."

The economist was quick to also praise Trump as a negotiator who has deep knowledge of trade issues, indicating that the tariff threats could be used as they had during Trump's first term to ultimately lower barriers to trade and improve outcomes for the U.S. economy. "Donald Trump is more familiar with the gains from trade than any politician I've ever talked to in my life," Laffer said. "Do not take this paper in any way, shape or form as criticizing Donald Trump and what his strategies are."

He added that he trusts the president and sees him as exceptionally competent. While Trump's tariff plans have frightened the stock market and U.S. consumers, Laffer's analysis and other reports show the possible economic risks if the threat of import taxes is unable to produce a durable set of deals with other countries.



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Caribbean Mercantile Bank N.V.
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'The Ballad of Wallis Island' is the loveliest movie of the year (so far)

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

It's never a bad time for a film like "The Ballad of Wallis Island," but at the moment it feels like a much-needed balm. Modest in scope and made with the lightest of touch, not unlike the lovely folk songs that populate its soundtrack, it's also deceptively powerful: A gentle ode to moving on, in quirky packaging.

This is a movie about a kind, chatty man named Charles (Tim Key) who invites his favorite folk band to play a concert on the remote island where he lives alone in a massive old home. Charles is a semi-recluse only by circumstance: He's holed himself up in this home full of eccentric acquisitions over the years after a lucky lottery win (there's another punchline there, but I won't spoil it). Wallis Island, though beautiful and serene, with white cliffs and rocky shores (it was shot in Wales), is not the kind of place where there's a lot of socializing, but there is quite a bit of time for reflection, hob-



This image released by Focus Features shows Carey Mulligan, left, and Tom Basden in a scene from "The Ballad of Wallis Island."

Associated Press

bies and, probably, talking to oneself at length. And Charles's greatest passion is McGwyer Mortimer (Tom Basden and Carey Mulligan), a once popular folk group who have not been together, professionally or romantically, for almost a decade. That this is to be a reunion is terrible news for

Herb McGwyer (Basden), who has made a name for himself as a solo artist and who arrives first, already aggrieved about the decisions that have led him here. All he seems to know is that it's a small gig that will get him a cool half million pounds, which will effectively finance his next al-

bum. Everything else about this journey to Wallis Island comes as an unwelcome surprise, starting with the fact that there's no dock, no car, no hotel and he's stuck as Charles' houseguest.

The owner of the small general store (Sian Clifford, always a welcome pres-

ence) does not even carry rice, which Herb needs to dry out his water damaged phone. That's a special order. And then Nell Mortimer (Mulligan) arrives, new husband, Michael (Akemnji Ndifornyen) in tow. Herb, faced now with his ex, has no phone and no escape plan: The one man who ferries people to and from the main island doesn't even keep a reliable schedule (the boat times are listed with a disclaimer: "sometimes").

Nell, meanwhile, is ready to perform with her old beau. She needs the money, but has also moved on with her life making chutney in the Pacific Northwest, and seems to be in a good place.

Herb remains the put-upon artist, a ball of childish anxiety and ego who has since sold out and seems to regret how things transpired with Nell so many years ago. And then there's Charles who is simply elated to be in the presence of these two. It's a fun group of somewhat conflicting interests to mash together. □

Betty White, TV's Golden Girl, celebrated at stamp ceremony in Los Angeles

By BETH HARRIS
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Betty White is making her mark on the nation's snail mail. The beloved actor of "The Golden Girls" fame was celebrated with a new U.S. Postal Service stamp at a first-day-of-issue ceremony at the Los Angeles Zoo on Thursday.

Fans that were crowded behind barricades cheered as a blue curtain dropped to reveal the stamp featuring a portrait of White against a violet-colored background with lighter shades of bubbly spots in a nod to her sparkling personality. She wears a blue polka-dot blouse and peeking out of her blond curls is an earring shaped like a pawprint.

"When I was working on the stamp surrounding myself with Betty White videos

and pictures, I felt like I was working on a portrait of a family member," Boston-based artist Dale Stephanos said. "I wanted Betty's huge personality to take center stage."

The illustration is based on a photo taken by Kwaku

Alston in 2010.

At the celebration, singer-songwriter Ellis Hall performed a snippet of "Thank You for Being a Friend," the theme song to "The Golden Girls."

A laughing kookaburra and other squawking birds

occasionally interrupted the speakers, which surely would have delighted the animal-loving White.

"Animals were her kids and she loved them all any shape, size and kind," said Richard Lichtenstein, a board member of the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association.

White had worked with the zoo since its opening in 1966 until her death in December 2021, a couple weeks shy of her 100th birthday.

"Who didn't love Betty White?" Lichtenstein said. "Her smile, her sense of humor, her basic decency. Our country, our city and yes, even our Los Angeles Zoo, would be much better if more people followed her example. Betty White put her stamp on everyone and anyone she came in contact with."

He said White's financial

support and advocacy helped make possible exhibits featuring chimps, gorillas and elephants, among others.

Lichtenstein said White set up a private foundation before her death that funds various zoo programs.

"This zoo, its inhabitants and this community meant so much to Betty White just as she meant so much to all of us," said Amber McReynolds, chair of the USPS board of governors. "Betty White was an American treasure."

People lined up to purchase panes of 20 forever stamps, pins and notecards before getting first-day cancellations near a churro snack stand while schoolchildren walked by.

"This stamp is special because let's face it, everybody loves Betty White," Stephanos said. □



Dale Stephanos, artist who created the Betty White stamp, speaks at the first day of issue dedication ceremony Thursday, March 27, 2025, at the Los Angeles Zoo, in Los Angeles.

Associated Press

A look inside the Tampa Bay Rays' 120-hour makeover of the Yankees' Steinbrenner Field

By RONALD BLUM
AP Baseball Writer

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — Junior Caminero opened the narrow white door in his new spacious locker and the Tampa Bay third baseman discovered a bat Giancarlo Stanton left behind.

Down the row at the other prestigious corner stall, pitcher Shane Baz had no idea he was in Aaron Judge's spring training abode.

"I haven't found anything yet," he said. "I'll take anything."

Left homeless after Hurricane Milton destroyed the Tropicana Field roof on Oct. 9, the Rays began their season as renters at Steinbrenner Field, the New York Yankees spring training headquarters, playing the Colorado Rockies on Friday in the final major league opener.

The Rays replaced more than 3,000 signs and images in the 11,000-capacity ballpark during a 120-hour makeover after the Yankees' final home spring training game ended Sunday at 3:33 p.m. By the time of Friday's first pitch at 4:10 p.m. on a sunny 82-degree



Fans fill George M. Steinbrenner Field during a spring training baseball game between the Minnesota Twins and the New York Yankees, Thursday, March 6, 2025, in Tampa, Fla.

Associated Press

afternoon, banners spelling "R-A-Y-S" covered the "Y-A-N-K-E-E-S" signs above the first- and third-base stands and large photos of Shane McCann and Taj Bradley were on the back of the scoreboard, visible to cars driving in.

An interlocking "NY" chandelier in the spacious Rays clubhouse was covered with a square canvas highlighting the Rays yellow, Columbia blue and white starburst with "Home of

the Rays" written on each side. The replica of the Yankee Stadium frieze above each stall was concealed, too, and a mat with white "TB" letters was on the floor leading to the showers, obscuring tile the read "The Bronx" and "New York," meant to emulate a subway.

Clubhouse staff found a touchpad and changed the 12 thin ceiling lights imitating Yankees pinstripes from white to deep blue.

Misters were installed in the dugouts and bench padding was replaced along with the bat and helmet racks.

But there were reminders this was a ballpark built for spring training's expanded rosters — most Rays had two lockers. Just 39 of 77 stalls were occupied, including 25 of the 51 ringing the walls.

"New York Yankees executive offices" was etched in the doors of an office

entrance and the statue of late Yankees owner George Steinbrenner and the display of New York's retired numbers outside the ballpark remained unaltered. Yankees logos were in place at the end of each row in the seating bowl and while "TB" replaced a Yankees sign atop the scoreboard, the letters "George M. Steinbrenner Field" remained underneath.

Their locker room repurposed as the visitor manager's office, umpires were moved to a trailer more than 100 feet beyond the left field corner, near a city street.

Rays players luxuriated in facilities far more lavish than the ones they were accustomed to in the Trop: a two-level weight area, three therapy pools with TVs at water level, sauna red-light therapy, four batting cages and an indoor/outdoor dining area.

"It's almost too much," said pitcher Zack Littell, prepping for his start Saturday. "There's so much space. I think if you had to complain about something, you have to walk a really long way to get places." □

Cuba had record 26 players on opening-day MLB rosters and Japan had 12 for its most since 2012

NEW YORK (AP) — Cuba had a record 26 players on Major League Baseball's opening day rosters and Japan had 12 for its most since 2012.

The percentage born outside the 50 states remained at 27.8%, matching its lowest level since 2016.

There were 265 players from 18 nations and territories outside of the 50 states among 954 players on opening day active rosters and injured, restricted and inactive lists, the commissioner's office said Friday. Cuba's total topped its previous high of 23 in 2016, 2017 and 2022. Japan's total was its most since 13 in 2012.

The overall percentage matched last year and was

down 28.5% in 2023, which was the lowest since 27.5% in 2016. It has remained in the 26-29.8% range since 2002, peaking in 2017.

The total international players was the fourth-highest behind 291 in 2020 (when there were expanded 30-man active rosters), 275 in 2022 (when there were expanded 28-man active rosters) and 270 in 2023.

The Dominican Republic led countries outside the U.S. with 100, down from 108 last year and 110 in 2020. Canada's 13 matched last year for its most since 17 in 2013.

Venezuela was second at 63, followed by Cuba (26), Puerto Rico (16), Canada (13), Japan (12), Mexico (11), Curacao and Pan-

ama (four), South Korea (three), Aruba, Australia and Colombia (two) and Bahamas, Brazil, Germany, Honduras, Nicaragua and South Africa (one apiece). Atlanta catcher Chadwick Tromp joined San Diego infielder Xander Bogaerts to give Aruba two players for the first time.

San Francisco's Jung Hoo Lee and Philadelphia's Jesús Luzardo were listed as miscellaneous, Lee as born in Japan of South Korean descent and Luzardo as born in Peru of Venezuelan descent.

Houston and San Diego topped teams with 16 international players each, with the Astros having a share of the lead for the fifth straight season. They were followed

by Atlanta (14), the New York Mets (13) and Baltimore and Miami (12 each). The 18 nations and territories outside the U.S.

matched last year and were three shy of the high, set in 2018 and matched in 2022. □



Los Angeles Angels' Yohan Moncada (5) and Jorge Soler walk to the dugout during the second inning of a spring training baseball game against the Cincinnati Reds, Wednesday, Feb. 26, 2025, in Tempe, Ariz.

Associated Press

Deion Sanders' contract at Colorado extended through the 2029 season

By **PAT GRAHAM**
AP Sports Writer

Deion Sanders brought back the glitter — and the wins — to a downtrodden program in just two seasons.

For that, the Colorado Buffaloes rewarded the charismatic coach with a contract extension through the 2029 season, making him the highest-paid football coach in the Big 12 Conference and among the most lucratively paid across the country.

His five-year, \$54 million extension includes \$10 million in each of the first two seasons, \$11 million in the next two and \$12 million in Year 5. The deal was reached with Sanders' existing five-year, \$29.5 million deal he signed when he was brought in from Jackson State.

"Coach Prime has revolutionized college football and in doing so, has restored CU football to our rightful place as a national power," athletic director Rick George said in a statement. "This extension not only recognizes Coach's incredible accomplishments transforming our program on and off the field, it keeps him in Boulder to compete for conference and national championships in the years to come."

Sanders and the Buffaloes are coming off a 9-4 season in which they earned a spot in the Alamo Bowl.

The Buffaloes have big cleats to fill, though. They're



Colorado head coach Deion Sanders watches during the first half during an NCAA college football game against Arizona, Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024, in Tucson, Ariz.

Associated Press

losing Heisman Trophy winner Travis Hunter and Sanders' sons, Shedeur — a projected high pick in the upcoming NFL draft — and Shilo. Next season will mark the first time in many years that Deion Sanders won't be coaching one of his kids.

Sanders and his high-profile staff have assembled another talented recruiting class — from high school recruits to transfer portal additions. The headliners of the class are Liberty transfer quarterback Kaidon Salter, Alabama transfer defensive lineman Jaheim Oatis and Julian "JuJu" Lewis, a five-star high school quarterback who arrived on campus ear-

ly to get a head start. Either Salter or Lewis figures to step in and take over for Shedeur Sanders as Colorado attempts to make back-to-back bowl games for the first time since 2004 and 2005.

With Sanders' decision to stay put, the Buffaloes avoid all sorts of mass exodus — from the new fans and celebrities he's attracted to all the media attention the Buffaloes have received. In addition, the high-level recruits who were lured to town by the presence of Sanders figure to be staying, too.

Should Sanders take another job — in the NFL or another NCAA team — his buyout is \$12 million if he terminates

the deal on or before December 31, 2025; \$10 million in 2026, \$6 million in 2027, \$4 million in 2028 and \$3 million in 2029.

Among his incentives are \$150,000 if the Buffaloes win nine games in the regular season and \$100,000 for each additional victory in the regular season.

He also receives \$150,000 if the team plays in the Big 12 title game and \$150,000 if Colorado is invited to a non-college football play-off bowl. It's \$400,000 should the team win the conference championship or appear in the first round of the College Football Playoff. A first-round win earns him an-

other \$50,000. From there, it's \$100,000 for the semifinals; \$200,000 for the championship game and \$250,000 if the Buffaloes win the national championship.

His selection as the Big 12 Coach of the Year would earn him \$75,000 and the national award \$150,000.

He's certainly helped raise the profile of Colorado since taking over:

— 22 of Colorado's 24 games have been selected to be on network television or the flagship ESPN.

— The two highest average home attendance seasons have been 2023 (53,180 fans) and last season (52,514).

— Colorado was sixth in viewership during the 2024 regular season, trailing only Georgia, Ohio State, Alabama, Texas and Michigan.

— The football team generated \$31.2 million in ticket sales in Sanders' first season in Boulder (a 4-8 record), according to the annual University of Colorado athletics NCAA financial reports. The program had \$13 million in ticket sales the year before his arrival.

— Colorado has seen its applications to attend the school increase 20% from a year ago.

— Home football games have meant a combined \$93.9 million in direct economic impact for Boulder and \$146.5 million in regional economic impact, according to the school. □

With Lionel Messi watching, Novak Djokovic advances to Miami Open final



Novak Djokovic, of Serbia, salutes the crowd after winning his semifinal match against Grigor Dimitrov, of Bulgaria, at the Miami Open tennis tournament, Friday, March 28, 2025, in Miami Gardens, Fla.

Associated Press

By **MARC BERMAN**
Associated Press

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) —

Novak Djokovic had some company for another Miami Open victory.

With Lionel Messi watching from a suite, Djokovic cruised into the Miami Open final by routing 14th-seeded Grigor Dimitrov 6-2, 6-3 on Friday at Hard Rock Stadium.

The fourth-seeded Djokovic is trying for his seventh Miami Open title in his first appearance in the event since 2019. The 37-year-old Djokovic, who won six times at the tournament's previous venue at Key Biscayne, also is going for his 100th professional title. He has been out of form this year, starting with an injury retirement at the Australian Open in January. Earlier this month, he lost his first match at Indian Wells to Botic van

de Zandschulp.

Next up for Djokovic is the winner of Friday night's Taylor Fritz-Jakub Mensik semifinal. In his on-court interview, Djokovic acknowledged the presence of Messi, who plays for Major League Soccer's Inter Miami. He also said: "It is very special having not played here in six years in the best city in the world." Djokovic was a late withdrawal last year after losing his second match at Indian Wells and deciding he needed time off to be with his family.

The men's semifinal was disrupted during the third game when a fan was re-

moved by security. The chair umpire came down to the court from his elevated chair and called for security as he walked toward the stands. Dimitrov had jawed with the fan and came over to the sideline to point out the heckler to the umpire.

Dimitrov eliminated Francisco Cerundolo in the quarters. He stayed on the court for 25 minutes after the victory because of dizziness and was helped to the back by tournament medical personnel. Djokovic was broken by Dimitrov in the first game, but he quickly settled down and closed out the first set in 32 minutes. □